

WALSALL SOUTH AREA PANEL

Tuesday, 4 February, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room, Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor K. Hussain (Chairman)
Councillor Z. Ali
Councillor D.A. Anson
Councillor I Azam
Councillor A. Ditta
Councillor H.S. Sarohi

Officers in attendance

Denise Perry - Area Manager
Lynne Hughes – Community Safety Manager
Paul Leighton - Group Manager (Road Traffic Network)
Inspector Dave Payne – West Midlands Police
Andy Rust – Head of Joint Commissioning
Nicky Devey – Response Service Team Leader
Craig Goodall - Committee Business and Governance Manager

37/14

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E.B Russell, Mrs. R.A. Martin and V. Whyte.

38/14

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest for the duration of the meeting.

39/14

Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

It was noted that there were no items to be considered in private session during the meeting.

40/14

Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting which took place on 10th December, 2013, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

41/14

Surveillance in Walsall

The Panel considered surveillance through CCTV in Walsall.

The Community Safety Manager updated Members on the current situation with CCTV across the borough and in Walsall. She explained that the Council's current stock of CCTV cameras was coming to the end of its useful lifespan. A strategic review was about to commence to consider the most effective methods to renew the areas surveillance methods. This will consider issues such as the most appropriate equipment, ownership or leasing methods and monitoring resources.

The Response Service Team Manager explained that the boroughs 117 CCTV cameras were monitored 24 hours a day by a single officer. She explained that there were other partners monitoring their own CCTV so there was potential to increase joint working moving forward.

Inspector Dave Payne reported that whilst there were problems with the reliability of some equipment CCTV provided significant evidence and lead to a high number of successful prosecutions.

The following were the principal points from the ensuing discussion:-

- The meeting discussed a number of issues with ineffective cameras and the impact this had on community confidence. It was important that the perception of value for money from CCTV was held by local people. This was currently under question due to the small but significant minority of broken or ineffective cameras.
- Money gained from the 'Proceeds of Crime Act' should be spent in the areas that it was acquired in and further information was requested on how applications for this money could be made.
- A Member felt that leasing CCTV cameras was preferable to buying as maintenance and relocation costs were built in to the contract. This would prevent the current situation of broken cameras occurring.
- It was not possible to use mobile traffic cameras as general CCTV cameras. It was also important to target motor crime.
- Licensed premises were only required to have CCTV if directed to.
- All CCTV cameras in Palfrey were working.

Overall the Panel were supportive of the role CCTV played in deterring and solving cases of crime and anti-social behaviour and urged the Council and its partners to work together to find an effective solution for the safety of local residents.

Resolved:

That:

1. Members be provided with further information on how to access funding gained through the 'Proceeds of Crime Act';

and;
2. A further report on surveillance in Walsall to be considered in 12 months time.

42/14

Local Policing Plan

The Panel considered the Local Policing Plan (LPP) and the intended community concerns it was proposed to contain within it.

Inspector Dave Payne introduced the report and explained the purpose of the LPP. He highlighted the proposed priorities and the consultation work that had been undertaken with the local community to understand their priorities.

Members welcomed the priorities and noted the links with their own area plan.

Members expressed concern about the turnover in neighbourhood Police teams and reflected on the benefits that continuity with Police Officers could bring.

Following a question it was explained that fortunately Walsall did not have a high prevalence of problems with gun or knife crime. The Police undertook preventative work on these issues.

Young people involved in anti-social behaviour were dealt with sensitively and proportionately to ensure the best long term results. The Police were conscious of dealing with matters informally in the first instance.

A member of the public noted that it was all very well for the Police to have a priority around inconsiderate parking but it would not have an impact unless that priority was enforced.

Resolved:

That the Local Policing Plan be noted.

43/14

Local Police and Crime Board

The meeting received reports from the Members of the Panel who sat on the Local Police and Crime Board.

Councillor Ditta explained that the Board had played a key role in tackling counterfeit goods and anti-social behaviour in Walsall South.

Councillor Ali reported that the Board played a strong role in managing the gap between the community, Police and partners.

A member of the public felt that the meetings of the Board should be publicised more widely.

Resolved:

That the report from the Local Police and Crime Board Members be noted.

44/14

Verge Parking update

Members were updated on the verge parking project for Walsall South.

The Group Manager (Road Traffic Network) reported that the preferred scheme in Primley Avenue was viable. It would deliver eight extra spaces and required no planning permission. He highlighted that there were services underneath the pavement that needed protecting which had delayed the anticipated completion of the scheme until around the end of April 2014.

Following questions he explained that the other identified schemes had been noted for future reference. He added that funding for further verge parking works was included as a reserve project on the Council's Draft Capital Programme for 2014/15.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

45/14

Urgent Care Plan Listening Exercise

The Panel considered the listening exercise taking place regarding the future of urgent care.

The Head of Joint Commissioning explained that the contracts for the Out of Hours Service, Walk in Centre and Urgent Care Centre were due to expire in March 2015. The Clinical Commissioning Group were considering the future of these services and wanted to gain the views of Members and the local community to help shape the future of the services.

The following were the principal points from the ensuing discussion:-

- Local people did not adequately understand the difference between urgent care services and which was the most appropriate to visit at any particular time
- GP practices where it was difficult to get an appointment pushed people into using inappropriate services such as Accident & Emergency (A&E)
- It was widely believed that the location of the Urgent Care Centre was not well known within the local community. It needed to be relocated to a more prominent position. This could help alleviate pressure on A&E.
- The Walk-in Centre was recognised as effective and useful by local residents.
- Further opportunities for increased Walk-in services were suggested across the borough for example, in district centres. Increased services could also be provided within Pharmacies or other high profile community locations.
- Pharmacists should be given more discretion to issue prescriptions.
- Urgent assistance needed to be given to local residents suffering from congestion and poor parking in residential streets around the Manor Hospital caused by staff and visitors. It was suggested that the Hospital should help local residents with this matter either by providing parking or through funding a residents parking scheme.

Resolved:

That:-

- (1) the comments of the Panel be considered as part of the listening exercise on Urgent Care Services;
- and;
- (2) Members be sent documents on Accident and Emergency Services considered by the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

46/14

Finance Report

The Panel considered the latest finance report.

The Area Manager explained that the Panel had spent the majority of £40,000 funding available to them during the year. There was a small amount of funding available that would be returned unless emergency projects emerged.

She explained that funding for 2014/15 was not yet confirmed but if money was available she would publicise this as soon as possible.

Following questions the Area Manager explained the application process.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

47/14

Ongoing Updates on Actions for Walsall South Area Plan

The Panel considered ongoing updates on actions for the Walsall South Area Plan.

The Area Manager reported that there were problems with the downloading data from a CCTV camera in Camden Street. Members of the community present highlighted the effectiveness of the camera in this location and how it was proving an effective deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Members reported problems with anti-social behaviour on Bath Road and Southbourne Avenue.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

48/14

Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 1 April, 2014.

Termination of meeting

The meeting closed at 8.24 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: